Office for National Statistics

Statistical bulletin

Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators: 26 May 2022

Early experimental data and analysis on economic activity and social change in the UK. These real-time indicators are created using rapid response surveys, novel data sources and experimental methods.

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9 June 2022

Notice

26 May 2022

Please note, this bulletin and accompanying datasets will not be published on 2 June 2022. However, the regular schedule will return the following week with the next publication due on 9 June 2022.

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1 . Main points

- Total online job advert volumes increased by 7% from the previous week, with increases across all categories and regions; the largest weekly category increase was in "graduate" (18%), while "legal" online job adverts showed the second- largest increase (16%) (Adzuna). Section 3.

- Almost half (47%) of businesses currently trading reported an increase in the prices of materials, goods or services bought in April 2022; in comparison, 23% of businesses reported an increase in the prices of materials, goods or services sold over the same period (initial results from Wave 57 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)).

- Consumer behaviour indicators largely showed falls in the latest week, with aggregate UK credit and debit card purchases and UK seated diners falling by 3 and 2 percentage points, respectively; meanwhile the number of visits to "retail and recreation" locations remained broadly unchanged (Bank of England CHAPS data, OpenTable, Google Mobility). Section 4.

- Transport indicators were relatively stable this week, with daily UK flights and road traffic broadly similar to the previous week; total ship visits were also broadly similar, compared with two weeks ago (EUROCONTROL, Department for Transport, exactEarth). Section 5.

- The System Average Price (SAP) of gas is now 20% of the peak on 10 March 2022, having increased by 41% in the latest week (to 22 May 2022) (National Grid).

Results presented in this bulletin are experimental and may be subject to revision. Data sources used to compile these indicators are regularly reviewed to ensure representativity and relevance, which may mean indicators change at short notice.

2 . Latest indicators at a glance

Notes:

1. The break in the available shipping data (from 14 to 19 June 2021) is when the data collection system changed.

2. Seasonally adjusted shipping data are unavailable between 9 and 21 May 2022. Non-seasonally adjusted data are unavailable between 9 and 15 May 2022. These missing data are because of technical issues.

3 . Business and workforce

Total online job advert volumes increased by 7% from the previous week, with increases across all categories and regions; the category with the highest volume compared with its February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) average level was "transport, logistics and warehouse" at 252%, a 5% increase from the previous week.

Company incorporations remained broadly similar and voluntary dissolution applications fell by 13% from the previous week. Compared with the equivalent week of 2019, incorporations and voluntary dissolution applications are 6% and 15% higher, respectively.

Potential redundancies fell by 5 percentage points while the number of employers proposing redundancies increased by 5 percentage points, respectively, in the week to 15 May 2022.

Online job adverts by category

These figures are experimental estimates of online job adverts provided by Adzuna, an online job search engine, by category and by UK country and English region. The number of job adverts over time is an indicator of the demand for labour. The Adzuna categories used do not correspond to Standard Industrial Classification (SIC) categories, so these values are not directly comparable with the Office for National Statistics' (ONS) Vacancy Survey.

Figure 1: The total volume of online job adverts on 20 May 2022 increased by 7% from the previous week, and was 142% of its February 2020 pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) average level

Volume of online job adverts by category, index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 20 May 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

Notes:

1. Further category breakdowns are included in the Online job advert estimates dataset and more details on the methodology can be found in Using Adzuna data to derive an indicator of weekly vacancies.

2. Users should note that week-on-week changes in online job advert volumes are outlined as percentages, rather than as percentage point changes. Percentage change figures quoted in the commentary will therefore not necessarily match the percentage point changes observed in the charts and accompanying dataset.

Download the data

.xlsx

All of the 28 categories saw an increase in the number of online job adverts on Friday 20 May 2022 when compared with the previous week. The largest increase was in “graduate” (18%), followed by “legal” (16%), and “travel and tourism” (14%).

The category with the highest level of online job adverts when compared with its February 2020 pre-coronavirus pandemic average levels was “transport, logistics and warehouse” at 252%, followed by “HR and recruitment” at 227%.

Job adverts by region

Figure 2: Online job adverts increased in all regions on 20 May 2022 from the previous week; the smallest increases occurred in the East Midlands, North East, South East, London and Scotland, all at 6%

Volume of online job adverts by UK countries and English regions index: 100 = February 2020 average, 4 January 2019 to 20 May 2022, non-seasonally adjusted

Download the data

.xlsx

The volume of online job adverts increased in all English regions and UK countries on 20 May 2022 when compared with the previous week.

Business impact and insights

Initial results from Wave 57 of the Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS) cover the reference period 1 to 30 April 2022, with a response rate of 22.4% (8,516 responses). The survey was live for the period 16 to 24 May 2022.

Table 1: Almost a quarter (24%) of UK businesses currently trading reported a decrease in turnover in April 2022 compared with March 2022, with 13% reporting an increase
Impact on turnover, businesses currently trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 April to 30 April 2022

	All Industries
Turnover increased	13%
Turnover stayed the same	52%
Turnover decreased	24%
Not sure	11%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS)

Notes

1. Initial weighted results, Wave 57 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).

2. Percentages in the table may not sum to 100% because of rounding.

Table 2: Almost half (47%) of businesses reported an increase in the price of materials, goods or services bought in April 2022, while 23% reported an increase in the price of materials, goods and services sold over the same period
Prices bought and sold have increased, businesses not permanently stopped trading, weighted by count, UK, 1 April to 30 April 2022

	All Industries
Prices bought increased	47%
Prices sold increased	23%

Source: Office for National Statistics – Business Insights and Conditions Survey

Notes

1. Initial weighted results Wave 57 of the Office for National Statistics' (ONS') Business Insights and Conditions Survey (BICS).

4 . Consumer behaviour

The UK credit and debit card purchases indicator decreased by 3 percentage points to 101% of its February 2020 average in the week to 19 May 2022 with falls of 3 percentage points in "delayable", "social" and "staple" spending while "work-related" spending remained broadly unchanged.

UK seated diners fell by 2 percentage points in the week to 22 May 2022, with seated diners in Manchester rising by 5 percentage points while seated diners in London remained broadly unchanged from the previous week.

Google Mobility data showed that visits to "retail and recreation" were broadly unchanged from the previous week and are 11% below pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) levels.

UK spending on debit and credit cards: daily CHAPS-based indicator

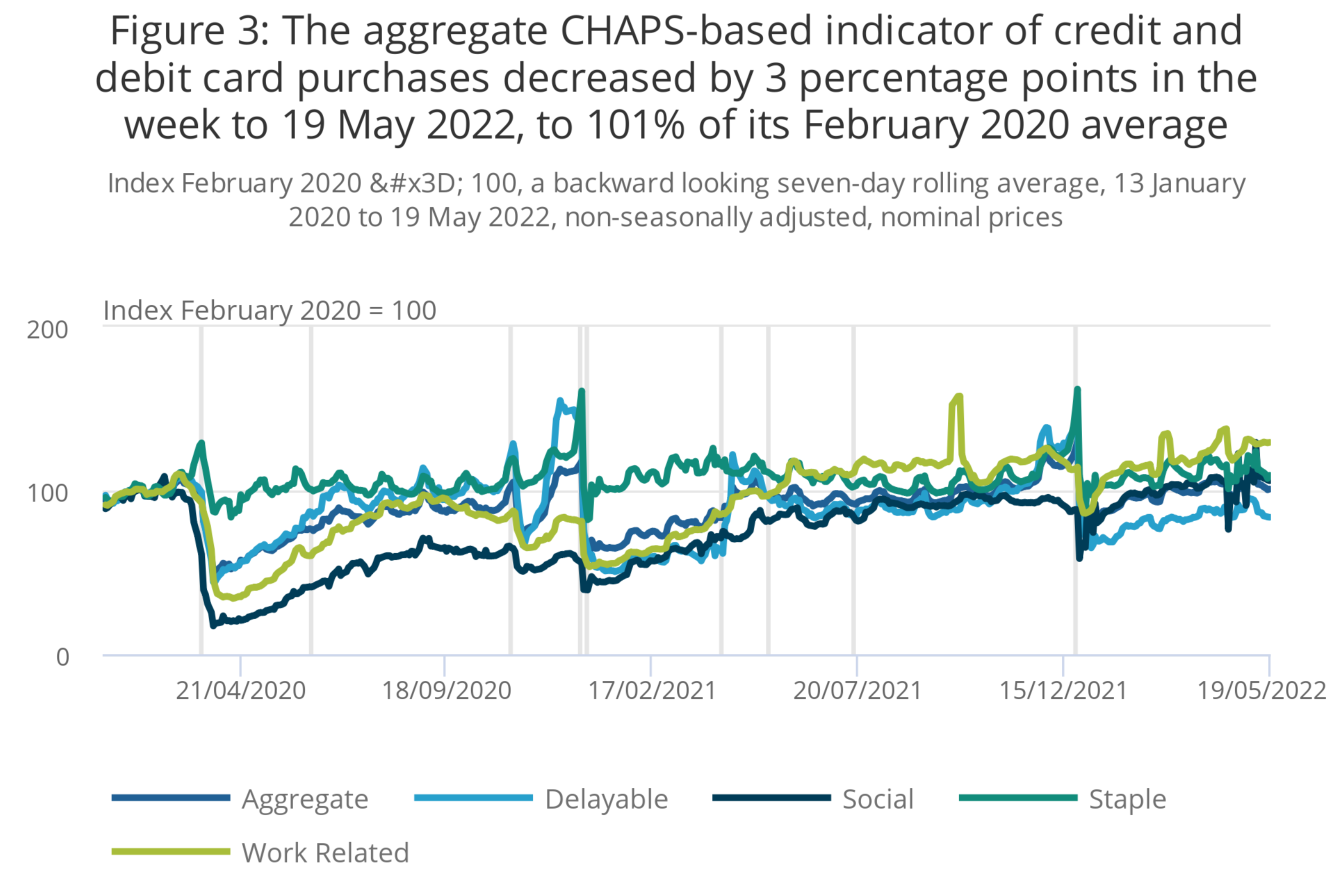
These data series are experimental faster indicators for estimating UK spending on credit and debit cards. They track the daily CHAPS payments made by credit and debit card payment processors to around 100 major UK retail corporates. These payments are the proceeds of recent credit and debit card transactions made by customers at their stores, both via physical and via online platforms.More information on the indicator is provided in the accompanyingBank of England methodology article.

Companies are allocated to one of four categories based on their primary business:

- "staples" refers to companies that sell essential goods that households need to purchase, such as food and utilities
- "work-related" refers to companies providing public transport or selling petrol
- "delayable" refers to companies selling goods whose purchase could be delayed, such as clothing or furnishings
- "social" refers to spending on travel and eating out

Figure 3: The aggregate CHAPS-based indicator of credit and debit card purchases decreased by 3 percentage points in the week to 19 May 2022, to 101% of its February 2020 average

Index February 2020 = 100, a backward looking seven-day rolling average, 13 January 2020 to 19 May 2022, non-seasonally adjusted, nominal prices



Source: Office for National Statistics and Bank of England calculations

Notes:

1. Users should note the daily payment data is the sum of card transactions processed up to the previous working day, so there is a slight time lag when compared with real-life events on the chart.
2. The vertical lines indicate notable events and coronavirus (COVID-19) restriction changes.
3. Percentage point difference is derived from current week and previous week index before rounding.

Figure 3 shows changes in the value of CHAPS payments received by large UK corporates from their credit and debit card processors, “merchant acquirers”.

All spending categories decreased by 3 percentage points in the latest week, apart from “work-related”, which was broadly unchanged. “Work-related”, “staple” and “social” spending were all above their February 2020 average levels at 129%, 109% and 106%, respectively. “Delayable” spending meanwhile remained below its February 2020 average levels at 84%.

Google Mobility by region

The Google Mobility data provide an indicator of changes in the levels of visits to different location types compared with a pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) baseline.

Visits are calculated based on publicly available anonymised data from Google users in the UK who have opted into Location History for their Google account, so are based on a subset of users. These data are presented by Google as the percentage change compared with the median value for the corresponding day of the week between 3 January 2020 and 6 February 2020. Full details of Google's methods used to compile the data are available.

This week we are introducing International Territorial Level: ITL1 region level breakdowns, based on population-weighted averages of Google’s sub-region data. These data provide insights into how visits to different types of places are changing in each geographic region. However, the accuracy of locations and categories varies from region to region, so caution must be applied when interpreting comparisons between regions.

Full details of the methodology we have used to create these regional level breakdowns and associated limitations are provided in Section 8: Measuring the data and Section 9: Strengths and limitations.

We have included data for the following location types:

- grocery and pharmacy: grocery stores, supermarkets, farmers markets, specialty food shops and pharmacies
- parks: parks, public beaches, marinas, public gardens and other public open spaces
- transit stations: public transport hubs such as train, light rail, tram and bus stations
- retail and recreation: restaurants, cafes, shopping centres, theme parks, museums, libraries, theatres and cinemas
- workplaces: places of work

Figure 4: Visits to retail and recreation locations in London in the week to 20 May 2022 were 24% below their pre-coronavirus average, up 27% from the same time last year

Retail and recreation visits by region, seven-day rolling average, Index: 100 = pre-coronavirus (COVID-19) baseline, 21 February 2020 to 20 May 2022

Notes:

1. These data have not been seasonally adjusted. Users should consider seasonal events, such as the weather and holiday periods, which may affect movements in the data.

Download the data

.xlsx

Visits by region to other location types are available in the accompanying Visits to location types dataset.

5 . Transport

Transport indicators were stable this week. Daily UK flights were broadly unchanged in the week to 22 May 2022, to 85% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019.

Road traffic on Monday 23 May 2022 was broadly similar to the previous week, at 100% of the level seen on the Monday of the first week in February 2020.

Total ship visits were broadly unchanged compared with two weeks ago, while cargo ship visits decreased by 10% over the same period.

UK flight data

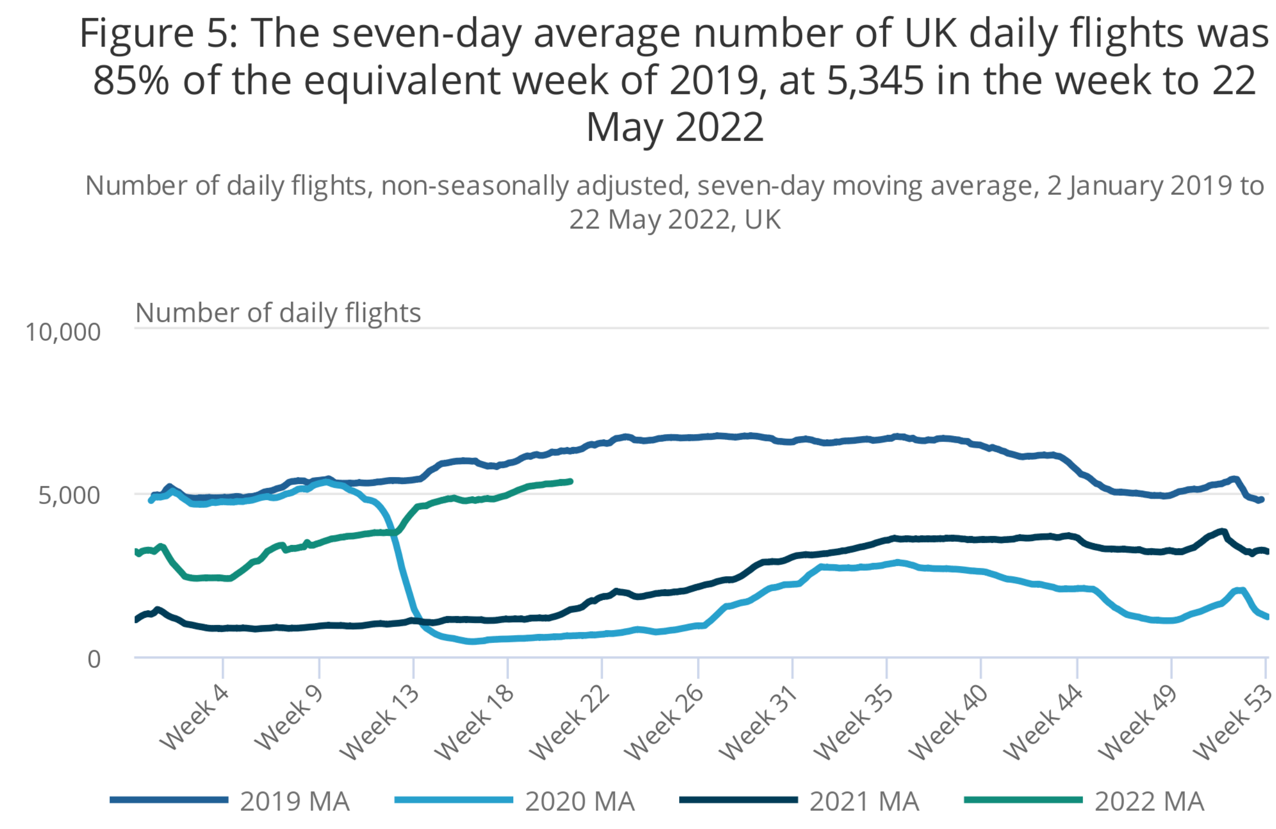
These data are daily flight figures from the [European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL)](). Daily flight numbers for the UK alongside other countries are available in [EUROCONTROL's dashboard](). EUROCONTROL is a pan-European, civil-military organisation dedicated to supporting European aviation. Its Aviation Intelligence and Performance Review Unit provides independent collection and validation of air navigation services' performance-related data and intelligence gathering.

The flights data include international arrivals and departures to and from the UK (including Crown dependencies) and domestic UK flights but exclude overflights (flights that pass over UK territory). They capture all flight movements that operate under Instrument Flight Rules (IFR), where the pilot uses instruments in the flight deck to control, guide and adjust the plane. This includes commercial flights carrying passengers and cargo as well as non-commercial flights such as private and military flights.

Data from EUROCONTROL do not include information on the volume of passengers or cargo carried on UK flights. Especially in the context of the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, flights might not be operating at full capacity and therefore trends in passengers and cargo will differ from trends in flights presented here.

Figure 5: The seven-day average number of UK daily flights was 85% of the equivalent week of 2019, at 5,345 in the week to 22 May 2022

Number of daily flights, non-seasonally adjusted, seven-day moving average, 2 January 2019 to 22 May 2022, UK



Source: European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation (EUROCONTROL)

The seven-day average number of UK daily flights was broadly similar to the previous week (5,272). This was 85% of the level seen in the equivalent week of 2019 and 374% of the equivalent week of 2021.

The full data time series available for UK flights can be found in the [accompanying daily UK flights dataset](), which contains daily flight numbers and the rolling seven-day averages.

6 . Data

Advance potential redundancies
Dataset | Released 26 May 2022
Weekly dataset showing the number of potential redundancies and employers proposing redundancies, submitted to Insolvency Service via HR1 forms.

Traffic camera activity
Dataset | Released 26 May 2022
Experimental daily traffic camera counts data for busyness indices covering the UK.

System Average Price (SAP) of gas
Dataset | Released 26 May 2022
Daily and rolling average System Average Price (SAP) of gas traded in Great Britain.

Weekly shipping indicators
Dataset | Released 26 May 2022
Experimental weekly and daily ship visits dataset covering UK ports.

Transactions at Pret A Manger
Dataset | Released 26 May 2022
Weekly transactional data from approximately 400 Pret A Manger stores around the UK.

UK spending on credit and debit cards
Dataset | Released 26 May 2022
Experimental indicator for monitoring UK retail purchases derived from the Bank of England's CHAPS data.

From 29 April 2022, the latest estimates from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey (OPN) which provides insights into daily life and events including people's experiences regarding cost of living, goods shortages and working from home are available fortnightly within our Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain bulletin.

Users should note that this section lists a selection of the data available with this publication. For the full list of available datasets please see the accompanying dataset page.

7 . Glossary

Real-time indicator

A real-time indicator provides insights into economic activity using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or Experimental Statistics, which represent useful economic and social concepts.

8 . Measuring the data

Information on the methodology used to produce the indicators in this bulletin is available in our Economic activity and social change in the UK, real-time indicators methodology.

Google Mobility by region

We have weighted Google's publicly available sub-region 1 data using ONS mid-2020 population estimates and averaged the weighted sub-region 1 data at region level.

In most cases the sub-region 1 locations mapped directly to the local authority population estimates, with a few exceptions.

The following locations had their population estimates aggregated prior to weighting to match a higher level of geography (ceremonial county) in the Google Mobility data:

- Shropshire, and Telford and Wrekin as unitary authorities were combined to make Shropshire
- Dorset and Bournemouth, Christchurch, and Poole as unitary authorities were combined to make Dorset
- North Northamptonshire and West Northamptonshire as unitary authorities were combined to make Northamptonshire

For London, the Google sub-region data are provided at the region level so no weighting is necessary.

The weighted average is calculated for each day using each sub-region 1 with data. Google has removed sub-region 1 data from the dataset where levels are too low to produce statistically significant results and/or do not meet privacy thresholds. See the accompanying Visits to location types dataset for a list of areas with missing data.

9 . Strengths and limitations

These statistics have been produced to provide timely indicators of the effect of developing world events on the UK economy and society, using close-to-real-time big data, administrative data sources, rapid response surveys or Experimental Statistics.

The data presented in this bulletin are reviewed and refreshed on a regular basis. Indicators are swapped in and out of the publication based on their suitability and availability.

UK coronavirus (COVID-19) restrictions

A full overview of coronavirus restrictions for each of the four UK constituent countries can be found:

- coronavirus in England
- coronavirus in Scotland
- coronavirus in Wales
- coronavirus in Northern Ireland

These restrictions should be considered when interpreting the data featured throughout this bulletin.

Seasonality

Seasonal fluctuations are likely to be present in many of these indicators so caution must be applied when interpreting changes in series that are not seasonally adjusted.

Google Mobility by region

When interpreting these data please consider the following limitations:

- we have weighted Google's sub-region 1 data by population, to give greater prominence in the region average to areas that are likely to have a higher number of visits, but visits may include individuals from outside of the local area

- location accuracy and the understanding of categorised places varies from region to region, so we do not recommend using these data to compare changes between regions with different characteristics (for example, rural versus urban areas)

- the makeup of an area may change over time, both in terms of the population size, the demographic, and the categorisation of places to visit

- caution is advised when comparing dates with high percentages of missing data. See the accompanying Visits to location types dataset for a list of areas with missing data

10 . Related links

Coronavirus (COVID-19) latest data and analysis
Webpage | Updated as and when data become available
Latest data on the coronavirus in the UK and its effect on the economy and society.

Public opinions and social trends, Great Britain
Bulletin | Released 13 May 2022
Latest indicators from the Opinions and Lifestyle Survey.

Deaths registered weekly in England and Wales, provisional
Bulletin | Released 24 May 2022
Provisional counts of deaths registered in England and Wales, including deaths involving COVID-19, in the latest weeks for which data are available.

Coronavirus (COVID-19) Infection Survey, UK
Bulletin | Released 20 May 2022
Initial data from the COVID-19 Infection Survey (delivered in partnership with IQVIA, the University of Oxford and Lighthouse laboratories).